

SC037647

Registered provider: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short breaks for up to four disabled children at any one time.

The registered manager has been registered since 2010.

Inspection dates: 28 to 29 August 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 30 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/11/2017	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/12/2016	Full	Good
04/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must ensure that all employees have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once a year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))	30/09/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person must ensure that the garden and wet room are maintained and decorated to a good standard and provide children with pleasant and homely environments. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that children's records are recorded in a way that is helpful to understand children's lives. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraphs 14.4 and 14.5)

In particular, staff should keep detailed records of children's experiences and their wishes and feelings. Records should clearly show each child's progress and how they are achieving better outcomes. Staff should make sure that this information is available for children's parents, carers and social workers.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Disabled children love coming to stay here for short breaks. They have a fabulous time staying in the fun and friendly atmosphere. They enjoy incredibly positive experiences that enrich their lives.

The caring and skilled staff provide disabled children with the highest possible standard of personal care. They are extremely knowledgeable about each child's needs and the best ways to support them.

The staff expertly support and encourage every child to express their wishes and feelings. The staff creatively use signs, symbols, photographs and short films of different

activities to help children make meaningful choices about how they spend their time.

The exceptional quality of staff's professional practice and their positive relationships with children are contributing to children's development. Disabled children are making sustained progress in their health and emotional well-being, mobility, personal care, social skills, communication and confidence in going out in the community.

Things that appear small are significant achievements for individual children, for example giving eye contact to another person, playing with a toy, using a fork to eat with, standing up independently, taking turns and going to the local shop. Children have chances to develop life skills through baking and putting together a see-saw.

Disabled children get every opportunity to do the same things as other children. They have the chance to spend time with other children and to see their friends. They do what they enjoy and try new things as an important part of their development. Disabled children take part in a wide range of exciting activities in the community, including going to busy places, such as the shops, restaurants, the seaside, waterparks, the cinema, playgrounds, sensory play and the safari park. Often these valuable and exciting experiences are things that the child may not be able to do with their families.

Staff's close and effective relationships with children's families, schools, healthcare professionals, psychologists and social workers mean that children's stays are carefully planned and reviewed. Together, they make sure that each child receives the best possible support.

Children are introduced sensitively to the service. This approach usually includes coming to visit several times before coming to stay overnight and at a pace with which they feel comfortable. This approach is highly effective in enabling children with very complex needs to feel safe enough to have short breaks.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Disabled children come to stay in an extremely safe and supportive place. Parents and carers are very confident about letting their children stay here. This is because they trust the staff and know that their children will be safe and that they will receive an exceptional quality of care.

Staff's professional practice and the safeguarding arrangements protect children from harm and support their emotional well-being. The staff treat children with dignity and always make sure that children's intimate care needs are met sensitively.

Staff understand the vulnerabilities of disabled children. They continually assess the risks for each child and take the necessary steps to make sure that children are protected.

Staff make informed professional judgements about when to allow a child to take a particular risk. For example, when one child wanted to go to the local town summer show, staff took all reasonable precautions, based on the child's specific needs, to

support him to do so. As a result, he had a wonderful time that was beyond all expectations.

Staff fully understand their responsibilities in protecting children. They are extremely vigilant and professionally curious. The staff recognise changes in children's behaviour, their standard of care and/or appearance which may indicate that children may be at risk of abuse or neglect. The manager and staff take highly effective action when they have concerns about a child's welfare. They work exceptionally well with parents, social workers and other key professionals to understand the risks to the child and consistently follow the child's protection plan.

Staff use carefully thought-out behaviour plans very successfully to create a consistent environment where children feel safe. Their professional practice is informed by applied behavioural analysis, a recognised research-based way of supporting disabled children. The manager, staff and behavioural specialists routinely review and adapt children's plans to meet their needs.

The occasions when children feel upset and show aggressive behaviour are rare. Staff intervene calmly and confidently, using the least intrusive way possible to support the child. They have worked highly effectively to help children manage their frustrations and anxieties around transitions between activities, limiting time on electronic devices and times of the daily routines. For example, staff are using a game to help a child with his morning routine. He gets a reward for each task when completing his 'Morning Challenge'.

Staff have the relevant expertise, skills and knowledge to respond to children's medical needs. The staff provide basic first aid and treatment, manage medication safely, help children to manage long-term conditions and they help to meet any health needs associated with a child's disability. Staff know what they must do if they have concerns about a child's health, including how to respond if a child has a seizure. A parent said, 'The staff are on top form about understanding my daughter's changing health needs. They have guided me through things when I've been worried.'

Children stay in a pleasant and safe environment and are well protected from hazards to their health. However, the wet room and the garden are not maintained to the same high quality as the rest of the house.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager provides clear and highly effective leadership. He leads a caring, passionate, very experienced and talented staff team. Together, the manager and staff have created an extremely positive and aspirational culture that is improving the lives of disabled children. The manager and staff are highly ambitious for disabled children to enjoy every possible opportunity to broaden their experiences and to fulfil their potential.

The manager understands what the service does well and continually strives to make further improvements to develop the service in children's best interests. Excellent

progress has been made in dealing with the weaknesses found at the last inspection. This has led to improvements in the way that children are consulted on their views about their stays to inform and support continuous improvement in the quality of care provided. Staff now have access to children's most recent education, health and care plans. The manager has informed Ofsted when he has serious concerns about children's welfare.

Staff develop their knowledge and skills through high-quality training that is tailored to meet the needs of disabled children, including children's medical conditions. Staff have valuable opportunities to consult with the behavioural support team and think about how best to support individual children.

The manager provides each member of staff with excellent support, guidance and encouragement. Staff use practice-related supervision and team meetings to reflect on children's progress and to develop ways to improve their professional practice.

However, not all staff have had their performance formally assessed by the manager in the last 12 months.

Although children's plans set out clear objectives for their stays, staff are not always keeping informative records about children's progress in achieving these outcomes. This information would be useful in understanding children's development and helping social workers plan for their care.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC037647

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Children's Services, Huyton Municipal Buildings, 6th Floor, Huyton, Knowsley, Merseyside L36 9YU

Responsible individual: Ruth France

Registered manager: James De Turberville

Inspector

Nick Veysey: social care inspector

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